The Many Faces of Hercules
The Institute for the Humanities, Montclair State University
Friday, March 2, 2012  9:00 am-1:00 pm

8.30-9.00 a.m.  Sign in for registrants

9.00-9.10 a.m.  Welcoming remarks, Director, Victoria Larson

9.10-10.00 a.m  "The Essential Hercules: Primary Sources, Primal Drives"

The character of Hercules comes down to us as the Classical demi-god hero *par excellence*, a figure said to typify the essence of the Greco-Roman identity. But many incarnations of Hercules in later history, down to our current popular culture, give us a character simplified, sanitized, and shifted away from his ancient sources, creating various personae for the hero that often serve to obscure his original mythical significance. What is the source and core of Hercules as a mythical character? What essential human impulses or energies, what cultural imperatives and drives, does he express? In this presentation, Dr. Gill explores the archetypal significance of Hercules, one of our most important, and most obscure, mythical figures.

*Speaker: Glen Gill, Department of Classics and General Humanities, MSU*

10.00-10.50 a.m.  "Deianira and the Death of Hercules"

This presentation will explore the myths surrounding Hercules' "unheroic" death. We will look closely at Sophocles' *Women of Trachis* and discuss how this play provides a complicated portrait of Hercules, one that challenges his status as the champion of the twelve labors. We will then look more broadly at ways to integrate Greek tragedy into the study of mythology.

*Speaker: Mary English, Department of Classics and General Humanities, MSU*

10.50-11.10 a.m.  Coffee, bagels, danish

11.10-12.00 p.m.  "Why Hercules? Why was this figure so popular with the ancients, and what can we do with him now?"

This presentation will take off from the paradox of Hercules' simultaneous roles as immortal god and mortal human hero, and explain why that contradiction made it so easy for individuals and groups to appropriate and use him for their own purposes, as illustrated by several examples ancient and modern. We will then discuss ways to help students get beyond archetypes and stereotypes and use their own reception of different stories about the hero to identify and analyze ideas that are important today.

*Speaker: Susan Hussein, Department of Classics and General Humanities, MSU*

12.00-12.50 p.m.  "Hercules: The Later Journeys"

The images of Hercules have been endlessly adapted since the early Classical era. I shall present a diverse variety of these images, from the Capitoline bust of Commodus, to the Carolingian Hercules, to Hercules among the Romantics, to Schwarzenegger and Sorbo – and more.

*Speaker: Jean Alvares, Department of Classics and General Humanities, MSU*